BEFORE THE MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA DIVISION OF MEDICAL QUALITY DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Accusation Against:)) No. 07-90-5992
ROBERT G. TRAHMS, M.D. Certificate No. C-24815)
Respondent.)))

DECISION

The attached Stipulation in case number 07-90-5992 is hereby adopted by the Division of Medical Quality of the Medical Board of California as its decision in the above entitled matter.

This Decision shall become effective on <u>JUNE 13, 1996</u>.

IT IS SO ORDERED <u>MAY 14, 1996</u>.

DIVISION OF MEDICAL QUALTY MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA

ANABEL ANDERSON IMBERT, M.D.
President

Rν

1 2 3 4 5	DANIEL E. LUNGREN, Attorney General of the State of California ISA R. RODRIGUEZ Deputy Attorney General STATE BAR NO. 104838 2101 Webster Street, 12th Floor Oakland, CA 94612-3049 Telephone: (510) 286-4042 Facsimile: (510) 286-4020
6	Attorneys for Complainant
7	
8	BEFORE THE MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA
9	DIVISION OF MEDICAL QUALITY STATE OF CALIFORNIA
10	
11	In the Matter of the Accusation Against: No. 07-90-5992
12	ROBERT G. TRAHMS, M.D. 599 Sir Frances Drake Blvd. STIPULATION AND WAIVER
13	Greenbae, CA 94904-1742
14	Physician and Surgeon Certificate No. C-24815
15	Respondent.
16	
17	IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED by and between the respondent ROBERT
18	G. TRAHMS, M.D., by and through his attorneys, Kurt W. Melchior and Elaine M.
19	O'Neil, and the Executive Director of the Medical Board of California, by and through
20	its attorney, Isa R. Rodriguez, Deputy Attorney General, as follows:
21	1. That Accusation No. 07-90-5992 is presently pending against respondent
22	ROBERT G. TRAHMS, M.D., (hereinafter referred to as "respondent") in the above-
23	entitled matter.
24	2. That respondent was served by registered mail with the Accusation,
25	Statement to Respondent, and Notice of Defense in the above-entitled matter.
26	3. That respondent understands the nature of the charges alleged in the
27	above-mentioned pending Accusation as constituting possible grounds for disciplinary
-	

action against his certificate.

- 4. That respondent is fully aware of his right to a hearing on the charges and allegations contained in the above-mentioned pending Accusation.
- 5. That respondent fully and voluntarily waives his right to a hearing on the charges and allegations contained in the above-mentioned pending Accusation and that he further agrees to waive his right to reconsideration, judicial review, and any and all other rights which may be accorded him by the Administrative Procedure Act and the law of the State of California with regard to Accusation No. 07-90-5992.
- 6. That it is acknowledged by the parties hereto that this Stipulation constitutes an offer in settlement to the Medical Board of California (hereinafter referred to as "Board") and that it, and the recitals herein, are not effective until adoption by said agency.
- 7. That in the event this Stipulation is not adopted by the Board, nothing herein recited shall be construed as a waiver of respondent's right to a hearing or as an admission of the truth of any of the matters charged in the Accusation or contained herein.
- 8. That all admissions of fact and conclusions of law contained in this Stipulation are made exclusively for this proceeding and any further proceedings between the Board and the respondent if, and only if, adopted by the Board and shall not be deemed to be admissions for any purpose in this or any other administrative, civil or criminal action, forum, or proceeding.
- 9. That respondent denies all allegations of incompetence, but acknowledges that the Board is in possession of *prima facie* evidence, which would be sufficient to establish a *prima facie* case of repeated acts of negligence as set forth in Accusation No. 07-90-5992 (hereinafter attached as Exhibit A), and that this evidence, if considered without more, would be grounds for discipline.
 - 10. That respondent asserts that had this matter proceeded to hearing he

would have introduced rebuttal and mitigatory evidence as to the allegations and that respondent believes that the rebuttal evidence would have been sufficient to rebut the existence of any grounds for discipline, but has chosen to forego the right to introduce such evidence and to argue its probative value for purposes of these negotiations and in order to avoid the time, expense, and uncertainty of trial, if this settlement is approved by the Board.

- 11. That based on the foregoing recitals, and without admitting to any violations of the Medical Practice Act, respondent nonetheless agrees that the Board has prima facie grounds for imposing discipline for repeated negligent acts.
- 12. That, further, based on the foregoing recitals, <u>IT IS HEREBY</u>

 <u>STIPULATED AND AGREED</u> that the Medical Board of California may issue the following Order:

Certificate No. C-24815 heretofore issued to respondent Robert G. Trahms, M.D., is hereby revoked; however, said revocation is stayed and respondent is placed on probation for five (5) years upon the following terms and conditions.

I. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

- A. Within 90 days of the effective date of this decision, and on an annual basis thereafter, respondent shall submit to the Division for its prior approval an educational program or course to be designated by the Division, which shall not be less than 20 hours per year, for each year of probation. This program shall be in addition to the Continuing Medical Education requirements for re-licensure. Following the completion of each course, the Division or its designee may administer an examination to test respondent's knowledge of the course. Respondent shall provide proof of attendance for 45 hours of continuing medical education of which 20 hours were in satisfaction of this condition and were approved in advance by the Division.
- B. Within 60 days of the effective date of this decision, respondent shall take and pass an oral or written examination, in the area of psychiatry to include issues of

differential diagnosis, therapeutic management, and appropriate record keeping. Such examination shall be administered by the Division or its designee. If respondent fails this examination, respondent must take and pass a re-examination consisting of a written as well as an oral examination. The waiting period between repeat examinations shall be at three month intervals until success is achieved. Respondent shall pay the cost of any examinations. If respondent fails the first examination, respondent shall cease the practice of medicine until the re-examination has been successfully passed, as evidenced by written notice to respondent from the Division. Failure to pass the required examination no later than 100 days prior to the termination date of probation shall constitute a violation of probation.

C. Within 30 days of the effective date of this decision, and on a periodic basis thereafter as may be required by the Division or its designee, respondent shall undergo a psychiatric evaluation (and psychological testing, if deemed necessary) by a Division-appointed psychiatrist, who shall furnish an evaluation report to the Division or its designee. The respondent shall pay the cost of the psychiatric evaluation.

If respondent is required by the Division or its designee to undergo psychiatric treatment, respondent shall within 30-days of the requirement notice submit to the Division for its prior approval the name and qualifications of a psychiatrist of respondent's choice. Respondent shall undergo and continue psychiatric treatment until further notice from the Division or its designee. Respondent shall have the treating psychiatrist submit quarterly status reports to the Division or its designee indicating whether the respondent is capable of practicing medicine safely.

D. Within 30 days of the effective date of this decision, respondent shall submit to the Division or its designee for its prior approval a plan of practice in which respondent's practice shall be monitored by another physician in respondent's field of practice, who shall provide periodic reports to the Division or its designee.

4.

If the monitor resigns or is no longer available, respondent shall, within

10

11

12

13

14 15

16

17 18

19 20

21 22

23

24 25

26 27 15 days, move to have a new monitor appointed, through nomination by respondent and approval by the Division or its designee.

E. Respondent shall reimburse the Board one thousand, five hundred dollars (\$1,500.00) for the cost of investigation resulting in the filing of this Accusation.

П. STANDARD CONDITIONS

- A. Respondent shall obey all federal, state, and local laws, and all rules governing the practice of medicine in California.
- B. Respondent shall submit quarterly declarations under penalty of perjury on forms provided by the Division, stating whether there has been compliance with all the conditions of probation.
- C. Respondent shall comply with the Division's probation surveillance program.
- D. Respondent shall appear in person for interviews with the Division's medical consultant upon request at various intervals and with reasonable notice.
- E. The period of probation shall not run during the time respondent is either not in practice or is residing or practicing outside the jurisdiction of California. If, during probation, respondent moves out of the jurisdiction of California to reside or practice elsewhere, respondent is required to immediately notify the Division in writing of the date of departure, and the date of return, if any.
- F. Upon successful completion of probation, respondent's certificate will be fully restored.
- G. If respondent violates probation in any respect, the Division, after giving respondent notice and the opportunity to be heard, may revoke probation and carry out the disciplinary order that was stayed. If an accusation or petition to revoke probation is filed against respondent during probation, the Division shall have continuing jurisdiction until the matter is final, and the period of probation shall be extended until the matter is final.

1	13. Respondent's decision to waive his right to a hearing and to waive his
2	right to reconsideration, judicial review, and all other rights accorded by the laws of the
3	State of California with regard to the above-entitled Accusation is made freely and
4	voluntarily and is not the result of coercion or undue influence by any persons or
5	parties.
6	Dated: 4/1/96 DANIEL E. LUNGREN, Attorney General
7	of the State of California
8	Dr. R. Rodrigues
9	ISA R. RODRIGUEZ
10	Deputy Attorney General
11	Attorneys for Complainant
12	Dated: April 12, 1996 MEICHIOR and
13	110111 11111111111111111111111111111111
14	ELAINE M. O'NEIL
15	Attorneys for Respondent
16	I hereby certify that I have read this Stipulation and Waiver in its
17	entirety, that my attorneys of record have fully explained the legal significance and
18	consequences thereof, that I fully understand all of same, and in witness thereof I affix
19	my signature.
20	Dated: 4-10-96 Koleut S. Narma MD.
21	ROBERT G. TRAHMS, M.D. Respondent
22	
23	
24	
25	
26	
27	
	11

1 2	of the State of California
3	455 Golden Gate Avenue, Room 6200
4	2101 Webster St., 12th Floor Oakland, CA 94612-3049
5	Telephone: (510) 286-4042
6	Attorneys for Complainant
7	
8	BEFORE THE DIVISION OF MEDICAL QUALITY
9	MEDICAL BOARD OF CALIFORNIA STATE OF CALIFORNIA
10	
11	
12	In the Matter of the Accusation) No. 07-90-5992 Against:
13) <u>ACCUSATION</u>
14	ROBERT G. TRAHMS, M.D.) 599 SIR FRANCIS DRAKE BLVD.)
15	GREENBRAE, CALIFORNIA 94904-1732) Physician & Surgeon License) No. C-24815
16	Respondent.)
17	
18	DIXON ARNETT, complainant herein, charges and alleges
19	as follows:
20	1. He is the Executive Director of the Medical Board
21	of California, State of California (hereinafter "the Board") and
22	makes these charges and allegations solely in his official
23	capacity.
24	2. At all times material herein, respondent ROBERT G.
25	TRAHMS, M.D. (hereinafter "respondent") has held physician and
26	surgeon certificate No. C-24815, which was issued to him by the
27	Board on or about January 10, 1963.

1

2

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19 20

21

22

23

24

25

26 27

All statutory references are to the Business and Professions Code unless otherwise indicated.

On September 23, 1976, an accusation (Case No. D -1878) was filed against respondent's physician's and surgeon's certificate. On August 17, 1979 a Decision became effective, revoking respondent's physician's and surgeon's certificate.

On February 19, 1985, a Petition for Reinstatement of Revoked Certificate was filed. On July 5, 1985, the Board issued a Decision with an effective date of August 16, 1985, granting respondent's petition for reinstatement on probationary terms and conditions.

On September 25, 1989, respondent filed a petition for termination of probation. On January 18, 1990 the Board issued a decision which became effective January 18, 1990, terminating respondent's probation.

Respondent's certificate is in good standing at the present time, and is renewed through May 31, 1994.

STATUTES

- 3. Section 2001 of the Business and Professions $Code^{\frac{1}{2}}$ (hereinafter referred to as the "code") provides for the existence of the board.
- Section 2003 provides for the existence of the Division of Medical Quality (hereinafter referred to as the "division") within the board.
- 5. Section 2004 provides, inter alia, that the division is responsible for the administration and hearing of disciplinary actions involving enforcement of the Medical

Practice Act (section 2000 et seq.) and the carrying out of disciplinary action appropriate to findings made by a medical quality review committee, the division, or an administrative law judge with respect to the quality of medical practice by physician & surgeon certificate holders.

- 6. Business and Professions Code section 125.3 provides, in pertinent part, that in any order issued in resolution of a disciplinary proceeding before any board within the California Department of Consumer Affairs, the board may request the administrative law judge to direct a licentiate found to have committed a violation/violations of the licensing act to pay a sum not to exceed the reasonable costs of the investigation and enforcement of the case.
- 7. Section 2220, 2234 and 2227 together provide that the division shall take disciplinary action against the holder of a physician's and surgeon's certificate who is guilty of unprofessional conduct.
 - 8. Section 2234 provides in part, as follows:

"The Division of Medical Quality shall take action against any licensee who is charged with unprofessional conduct. In addition to other provisions of this article, unprofessional conduct includes, but is not limited to the following:

22 | .

- (c) Repeated negligent acts.
- (d) Incompetence

. . .

26 | ///

27 | ///

FIRST CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

2

1

Patient J.O. $^{2/}$

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15 16

17

18

19

20

21 22

23

24

25

///

26

The full patient names will be disclosed upon receipt of respondent's Request for Discovery.

8. Between July 9, 1990 and July 19, 1990, respondent undertook the Marin General Hospital inpatient psychiatric care and treatment of patient J.O., a fifty-seven year old divorced woman with many hospitalizations characterized by confusion, unconsciousness, and a variety of cognitive and perceptual abnormalities.

She had previously been diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia and from bipolar disorder, manic type.

The current episode was marked by unconsciousness occurring seven weeks prior to admission, followed by incontinence, hallucinations, and hemiparesis upon wakening.

The patient's diagnoses at discharge were: (1) delirium, mild, acute & chronic-episodic (DSM III-R 293.00); (2) schizoaffective disorder, bipolar type (DSM III- R 295.70).

- Respondent's certificate to practice as a physician and surgeon is subject to disciplinary action for repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 2234 (c) and/or (d), in connection with the care and treatment of patient J.O., as more particularly alleged hereinbelow:
 - Respondent's admission note fails to adequately address the patient's:

1	1) History of her condition in the seven weeks
2	prior to her admission;
3	2) Family, social, work, and developmental
4	history.
5	B. Respondent's progress notes throughout the
6	hospitalization fail to adequately address the
7	patient's mental status.
8	C. Respondent instituted fluoxetine without a clinica
9	indication for doing so, especially in light of the
10	patient's diagnosis and known adverse psychiatric
11	effects of the medication.
12	D. Respondent was unable to formulate a differential
13	diagnosis of the patient's psychiatric disorder.
14	10. Respondent's conduct and omissions, as set forth
15	in paragraphs 9.A., 9.B., 9.C., and 9.D., jointly and severally
16	constitute repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence.
17	SECOND CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION
18	<u>Patient M.F.</u>
19	11. Between July 12, 1990 and July 18, 1990,
20	respondent undertook the Marin General Hospital inpatient
21	psychiatric care and treatment of patient M.F., a thirty-nine
22	year old woman, with a known seizure disorder, who was admitted
23	after an overdose of prescription medications.
24	The patient's diagnoses at discharge were: Organic
25	Mental Disorder NOS, Alcoholism; Borderline Personality Disorder
26	Organic Personality Disorder; Epilepsy, Tertiary Neurosyphilis.
27	///

- 12. Respondent's certificate to practice as a physician and surgeon is subject to disciplinary action for repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 2234 (c) and/or (d), in connection with the care and treatment of patient M.F., as more particularly alleged hereinbelow:
 - A. Respondent's admission note fails to adequately address the patient's mental status and suicidality.
 - B. Respondent's progress notes throughout the hospitalization fail to adequately address the patient's mental status and suicidality.
 - C. Respondent improperly instituted chlorpromazine in a patient with a known seizure disorder since chlorpromazine lowers the seizure threshold and increases the risk of subsequent seizures.
- 13. Respondent's conduct and omissions, as set forth in paragraphs 12.A., 12.B., and 12.C., jointly and severally constitute repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence.

THIRD CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

Patient M.D.

14. On July 25, 1990 respondent presented a family/staff treatment conference concerning patient M.D., a male psychiatric inpatient at Marin General Hospital. The treatment conference was called to plan for the patient's aftercare, and was attended by respondent, the patient, the patient's mother, social worker, nurse, and occupational therapist.

In the course of the treatment conference, respondent professed not to know the medications the patient was on, stated that he was unsure of the reason for ordering the medications, and suggested medications might be inappropriate.

Additionally, respondent presented himself as a person with paranoid problems.

During the conference, respondent engaged in bizarre, exaggerated behavior.

- physician and surgeon is subject to disciplinary action for repeated negligent acts, and/or incompetence pursuant to business and Professions Code sections 2234 (c) and/or (d), in connection with the care and treatment of patient M.D., as more particularly alleged hereinbelow:
 - A. Respondent's disingenuous behavior as "the unsurestupid-paranoid-doctor" was counter-therapeutic.
 - B. Respondent behavior undermined hospital staff's efforts to obtain medication compliance from the patient by confusing the patient as to the need for compliance.
 - C. Respondent didn't know what medications the patient was on, and was unsure of the reasons for ordering them.
 - D. Respondent was confused about a diagnosis for the patient.
 - E. Respondent was confused about a treatment plan for the patient.

_ _

F. Respondent was excessively influenced by the patient, rather than making decisions based upon his medical training.

16. Respondent's conduct, as set forth in paragraphs 15.A. through 15.F., jointly and severally constitute repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence.

FOURTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

<u>Patient A. M.</u>

17. Between January 4, 1991 and January 14, 1991, respondent undertook the Marin General Hospital inpatient psychiatric care and treatment of patient A.M., a thirty-eight year old, divorced, Kurdish-Iranian-American cabinet maker, who was admitted for this second admission with a recurrence of depression and suicidal ideation.

Within the last two years, the patient had made two suicide attempts, once with a medication overdose, and a second time by an attempted overdose of cocaine, heroin, and "speed." The second attempt precipitated the patient's previous hospitalization, from February 23 through 27, 1990.

The record describes a patient with a ten year history of depression, anger, and "devastation," accompanied by intrusive, obsessive thinking, and diminished concentration to the point of dangerousness in the performance of his occupation.

Respondent's psychotherapeutic regimen consisted of lithium carbonate, buspirone, chlormipramine, and triazolam, all started simultaneously.

///

The patient's discharge diagnoses were: (1) post traumatic stress disorder and bipolar disorder not otherwise specified.

- 18. Respondent's certificate to practice as a physician and surgeon is subject to disciplinary action for repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 2234 (c) and/or (d), in connection with the care and treatment of patient A.M. as more particularly alleged hereinbelow:
 - A. Respondent's admission note fails to include the following information:
 - 1) Sufficient history of the present illness;
 - 2) Mental status examination;
 - 3) Suicidal ideation/actions precipitating the admission;
 - 4) Family, social, work, and developmental history.
 - B. Respondent failed to adequately chart the patient's mental status throughout the patient's hospitalization.
 - C. Respondent started the patient on four new medications simultaneously, instead of layering the medications.
- 19. Respondent's conduct and omissions, as set forth in paragraphs 18.A., 18.B., and 18.C, jointly and severally constitute repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence.

1//

1///

FIFTH CAUSE FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION

2

1

3

4 5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

Patient S.J.

20. Between January 7, 1991 and January 21, 1991, respondent undertook the Marin General Hospital inpatient psychiatric care and treatment of patient S. J., a forty-year old woman who was admitted following a wrist-slashing. S.J. had been a patient of respondent's since July 1990, in both individual and group therapy.

Respondent prescribed a variety of medications for the patient, including: busipirone, chlormipramine, triazolam, and carbamazepine.

The patient's diagnoses at discharge were: (1) multiple personality disorder with severe suicidal risk and (2) alcohol dependence, continuous, chronic, severe.

- 21. Respondent's certificate to practice as a physician and surgeon is subject to disciplinary action for repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence pursuant to Business and Professions Code sections 2234 (c) and/or (d), in connection with the care and treatment of patient S. J., as more particularly alleged hereinbelow:
 - Respondent's admission note fails to include the following information:
 - 1) Sufficient history of the present illness;
 - 2) Mental status examination;
 - Admitting diagnosis. 3)
 - в. Respondent failed to adequately chart the patient's mental status throughout the patient's hospitalization.

Respondent started both buspirone and 2 D. chlormipramine together, at relatively high doses, 3 while withdrawing the patient from alcohol. 4 Respondent started the patient on triazolam at a .5 5 mg. dose which is the highest dose that can be 6 7 prescribed. Respondent prescribed carbamazepine for the 8 patient, notwithstanding her history of bone marrow 9 10 disease and without ordering a complete blood count. 11 Respondent's conduct and omissions, as set forth 22. in paragraphs 22.A., through 22.F., jointly and severally 12 constitute repeated negligent acts and/or incompetence. 13 **PRAYER** 14 15 WHEREFORE, complainant requests that a hearing be 16 held and that thereafter the Board issue an order: 17 Revoking or suspending respondent's physician and surgeon's certificate number C-24815 heretofore issued to 18 19 respondent Robert G. Trahms, M.D.; 20 Directing respondent to pay to the Board a 21 reasonable sum for its investigative and enforcement costs of 22 this action; and 23 111 24 111 25 /// 26 /// 27 ///

Respondent failed to complete a discharge summary.

c.

1

3. Taking such other and further action as is deemed just and proper to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. DIXON ARNETT Executive Director Medical Board of California State of California Complainant